SKYWATCH

Spotter Newsletter

NOAA National Weather Service
Pendleton, OR

newsletter also available at:
www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt/weatherSafety/spotterIndex.php

Spring 2005

Inside:

Spring 2005 Spotter Highlight

All About Me
by Brandon Coughlin, Benton-11H

I've lived in the Tri-Cities all of my life. It always fascinated me how the weather here could turn from a still, bright, sun-shining, warm day, into a cold, windy, stormy day. Then, before the day was over, it was again a still, bright, sun-shining, warm day! I'm also fascinated by thunderstorms. I would always want to stand outside to watch the action – never could figure out why, when something that big was going on outside, why mom and dad always made me stay in the house away from the windows!

For as long as I can remember, my grandmother would call down from Yakima during winter to ask "How's the weather down there?". I was usually the one that would give her a full report on what the weather was doing outside. My first experience at being a weather spotter!

In 1999, we moved to Benton City. I saw a flyer in the grocery store advertising the spotter program, and it indicated that our area needed more spotters. It wasn't until about a year later though, after I had gotten my amateur radio license, that I started learning more about Skywarn and what role amateur radio operators played in the program. I knew I had to sign up. From then on out, I started trying to get as involved as I could. After I earned my Level 1 Emergency Communications Certification, Alan Polan appointed me as Skywarn Net Coordinator for Benton and Franklin Counties. Then I mentioned to Alan that the Skywarn program needed to have a better Internet presence to be able to get the word out about the program and to attract more spotters. When I was younger, I had learned as a home-school project, how to design websites by designing a website for our family business. I continued to sharpen my skills and also got into graphics design, and ended up starting my own design business when I was 15.

When I originally designed the Skywarn website, the website was part of the Tri-City Amateur Radio Club's website and it focused primarily on providing information about ham radio communications. On February 1st, 2005 I launched a new website separate from the club's website. The website's focus is designed to be able to serve both the ham and non-ham spotter. It still has extensive information for ham radio operators on how to participate in the weather nets, but now it serves everyone by providing easy access to reporting criteria, estimation tools, radar and satellite imagery, the hazardous weather outlook, an email discussion list, and lots more! You can find the Skywarn website at www.skywarn-pdt.org

Severe Weather Awareness Week is Coming!
Stay tuned to NWR or log on to our website: www.weather.gov/Pendleton
for further details!!

Spotter Training Schedule 2005 (All times 7 PM)

Date	Location	County
3/10	Emergency Ops Center- 325 Willow View Dr. Heppner	Morrow
3/15	Emergency Ops Center- 651 Truman Av. Richland	Benton/Franklin
3/16	Courthouse Courtroom 221 S. Oregon Condon	Gilliam
3/21	Fire Station-Moro 309 Dewey St.	Sherman
3/23	Hal Holmes Center 201 N. Ruby Ellensburg	Kittitas
3/31	Fire Station #3-Hermiston 78760 Westland Rd.	Umatilla
4/4	Family Services Bldg.- 401 Fourth St. Fossil	Wheeler
4/25	High School Library- 911 S. Canyon Blvd. John Day	Grant
4/25	Conf. Rm-Port of The Dalles 3636 Klindt Dr. The Dalles	Wasco
4/26	Klickitat PUD-Goldendale 1313 S. Columbus	Klickitat
4/26	Crook County HS-Prineville Room 130; 1100 SE Lynn Blvd	Crook
4/27	North 1st St Conference- 223 N. 1st St. Yakima	Yakima
4/27	Sheriff's Office-Madras 675 NW Cherry Ln.	Jefferson
4/28	Event Room-Senior Center 1600 SE Reed Market Rd. Bend	Deschutes
5/12	Health Dept Conf Room- 310 W. Poplar Walla Walla	Walla Walla
5/17	Courthouse Jury Room 101 S. River St., Enterprise	Wallowa

Suggestion Box...

Every year we travel the region to give spotter training talks. These talks center of helping you understand how to better spot severe weather even before it arrives. We hope these trainings are beneficial. Usually the feedback is positive, but we'd like to know if there is anything else you'd like to see at trainings. Do you have any suggestions? What would you especially like to see? Please address your suggestions to either Dennis Hull (dennis.hull@noaa.gov) or Mike Cantin (Michael.cantin@noaa.gov). You can also give us a call anytime at 541-276-4493. Thanks for your input!

Spring/Summer Reporting Criteria:

Tornado, funnel cloud, wall cloud	Location, time & direction of movement, duration.
Hail	Pea size or larger.
Rainfall	½ inch or more over a short duration.
Flooding	Any kind, including dam failure. Is water rising or falling?
Wind damage	Wind speeds of 35 mph or greater, any damage.

Please call us on the spotter hotline, or at 541-276-4493, once it is safe to give your report. Thanks!!

Skywatch Gets More Versatile…

In this world so driven by technology, even the Skywatch newsletter isn't immune. To fulfill the needs of the many different people who receive this newsletter we've expanded how you can obtain a copy of Skywatch. Here's a brief overview…

#1: ***The ole' standby…*** If you really like looking in your mailbox and seeing that spotter newsletter each spring and fall you can still receive it through the mail. At this point it will be assumed you'd like it through the mail unless you state otherwise, either by email or by phone call.

#2: ***The inbox…*** If we've got your email address and you'd like to save some paper, you can receive your newsletter via email! At this point if we have your email address you'll likely receive your copy by this method.

#3: ***The internet…*** The newsletter is also available for viewing and printing on our internet page at http://newweb.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt/weatherSafety/spotterIndex.php. Winners of the spotter quiz along with the answers to the quiz will also be posted here.

The main reason that we're trying different ways of displaying and distributing the newsletter is to save paper and money. We now have over 1,000 newsletters to send out with every issuance, and as you can imagine that's a lot of paper to use. By letting us know that you'd like to receive the newsletter by one of these alternative methods you're helping us spend your tax dollars in better ways. Thanks for your support! If you have any questions please contact Mike Cantin at Michael.cantin@noaa.gov.

Are we in a drought? By Marilyn Lohmann

The National Weather Service does not declare when a drought begins or ends, but we can provide data to allow users to make decisions regarding the best use of the water resources available. The following is a summary of the latest conditions relating to the coming water supply season.

Water Year 2004-2005

After a short summer with well above normal precipitation in August, the fall and early winter months have been up and down in regards to precipitation. September was relatively dry with October wetter with amounts near to slightly above normal. November was very dry with many locations only seeing less than 50 percent of the normal precipitation. December was wetter over Oregon with some high amounts in Central Oregon, but precipitation remained well below normal over Washington. January was again very dry with most area's only seeing less than 50 percent of normal precipitation. So overall for the period October 2004 through January 2005, precipitation has been much below normal with amounts 40 to 70 percent of normal.

Snow pack across the region has been below normal through the season as well. In addition to the lack of precipitation, there has been above normal temperatures which have allowed the meager snow pack to begin melting off much earlier than normal. A very warm storm system moved through in mid January and depleted much of the lower elevation snowpack. Normally, the mountainous areas reach their maximum snow depth on or about March 1st. This year, this the maximum depths occurred in January with a gradual decrease in February.

Snow water equivalent as a percent of normal ending February 15th:

- Yakima Basin - 25%
- Umatilla, Walla Walla, Willow Basins - 30%
- John Day Basin - 55%
- Deschutes, Crooked Basins - 53%
- Lower Columbia, Hood River -24%

Data courtesy of the Natural Resource Conservation Service Water Supply Outlook

The outlook for the spring and summer is for below normal water supply in most Oregon and Washington river basins due to below normal precipitation and very low snow pack thus far this winter. Most rivers are expected to only see 50-70 percent of their normal volume of water. Water shortages for some users are a strong possibility for the coming spring and summer.

Precipitation across Northern Oregon and Southern Washington would need to be near 200 percent of normal for the remainder of the winter and spring to make up for the existing deficit in the water year total compared to normal. This is highly unlikely. In fact...the most likely scenario for March through April is for normal precipitation and above normal temperatures…according to the latest NOAA seasonal outlooks.

For further details on the water supply forecast, visit: http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/water_supply/water_supply.cgi.
For further details on drought visit the National Drought Mitigation Center:
http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/index.html

TWO MAJOR WINTER STORMS HIT REGION **By Jeremy Wolf**

Two major winter events occurred in the Pendleton forecast area this winter. The first was a series of snowstorms that hit portions of central Oregon from December 6-8th. The second was a significant winter storm along portions of the east slopes of the Southern Washington Cascades which occurred on January 17th.

On December 6th, heavy snow accumulations occurred in the Sunriver and La Pine areas of Deschutes County. Snow mixed with rain at times down in Bend and Redmond which resulted in much smaller snow amounts. Snow accumulations ranged from 12-18 inches between Sunriver and La Pine, with a foot of snow also reported four miles south of Bend. Another moist weather system moved through the night and morning hours of December 8th. This storm dumped another foot of snow in La Pine, where the snow depth reached 30 inches. Thank you spotters Deschutes 1, 2, 9, 29, 40H, 51, 62, 63, and 133 for your very needed snow reports during this major snowstorm.

On January 17th, a major winter storm hit the east slopes of the Southern Washington Cascades. Modified arctic air seeped south out of British Columbia before the storm, which was followed by warm moist air riding up and over the cold air trapped at the surface. Sleet accumulations of 2 to 3 inches was observed nine miles northwest of Rosyln. In addition, ice accumulations of around an inch were also observed, mainly near the cascade crest along interstate 90. Thank you spotters Yakima 2 and 30, as well as spotters Kittitas 1, 4H, 10, and 12 for your reports during the winter storm.

New Products

By Michael Vescio

The National Weather Service in Pendleton utilizes the latest technology to provide our customers with value-added and innovative forecast products. In the past year we have developed new prototype graphical forecasts for Internet display. These include the probability of freezing temperatures, probability of two, four, and six-inch snowfall amounts, and hours of sunshine and percent of possible sunshine forecasts. These products augment our traditional low temperature, snowfall, and cloud cover forecasts and provide our customers with more detailed information. This summer we will also be introducing a Heat Advisory product. Our research indicates that the risk for heat related stress and illness substantially increases when temperatures on two or more consecutive days reach or exceed 100 degrees. This new product will allow the Pendleton Forecast Office to warn the public of the potential danger of prolonged exposure to the heat. We are working on many other ideas that will likely lead to additional prototype products in the near future. So be sure to visit our website often at weather.gov/Pendleton.

Who We Are…

Weather Forecast Office Pendleton Staff List:

Michael Vescio	*Meteorologist In Charge*
Dennis Hull	*Warning Coordination Meteorologist*
Jon Mittlestadt	*Science and Operations Officer*
Jim Zdrojewski	*Observation Program Leader*
Rod Theis	*Electronic Systems Analyst*
Diana Locke	*Administrative Assistant*
Marilyn Lohmann	*Service Hydrologist*
Wade Earle	*Information Technology Officer*

Electronic Technicians:
Lynn Wilson
Johnny Blagg
Lead Forecasters:
Mary Smith
Vincent Papol
Zaaron Allen
Roger Cloutier
Joe Solomon
Journey Forecasters:
Alan Polan
Dian Coonfield
Cynthia Palmer
Gordon Hepburn
Jeremy Wolf
George Perry
Mike Cantin
Hydrometeorological Technicians:
Ann Adams

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Alan Polan, Meteorologist

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, and I grew up in North Miami Beach, Florida. I got interested in weather in September 1960 when hurricane Donna moved across south Florida.

I attended Miami-Dade Junior College and then transferred to Florida State University (FSU) for my Junior and Senior years to major in Meteorology. I was in Air Force ROTC while an undergraduate student at FSU. Upon obtaining my Bachelor's Degree in Meteorology, I was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Air Force Reserve in June 1969. I applied for and was granted a deferment from reporting to active duty in the Air Force to fulfill my Commissioned Officer active duty commitment so I could attend Graduate School. I was accepted into the FSU Graduate School to work on a graduate degree in Meteorology. I earned my Masters Degree in Meteorology from Florida State University in June 1971.

I served on active duty as an officer in the Air Force from July 15, 1971 to February 28, 1983. I separated from the Air Force with the rank of Captain and then joined the inactive Reserves. My first assignment in the Air Force was at the Air Force Global Weather Central (AFGWC), Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska and involved computer programming of numerical weather prediction models, used in forecasting hemispheric, as well as fine resolution, cloud cover. The cloud forecasts were used for classified projects involving photographic intelligence gathering conducted via polar orbiting satellites. I also worked as a computer programmer and later became the Detachment Commander of the Automated Digital Weather Switch (ADWS) at Fuchu Air Station in Tokyo Prefecture, Japan. The ADWS collected surface weather observations from the Soviet Union and other countries in the Far East and forwarded the data to AFGWC. The weather data was used in targeting ICBMs. I also worked on a meteorological database for Central Europe that was used in the design and testing of the Cruise Missile.

After leaving the Air Force, I worked as a computer programmer for Oceanroutes, Inc in Palo Alto and Sunnyvale, CA. While at Oceanroutes, I designed, coded, and implemented a program to plot graphical ocean wave and swell data and meteorological data for ship routing reports for clients of Oceanroutes.

I joined the NWS on February 26, 1990. My first job was as a Meteorologist Intern at the Weather Service Office in Chattanooga, TN. I was selected for a Journeyman Forecaster position at the Pendleton Weather Forecast Office (WFO) in early September 1995. While enroute to Pendleton, I attended the WSR-88D Doppler Weather Radar School in Norman, OK. Upon graduating from the Doppler Radar School, I reported for work at the Pendleton WFO on October 4, 1995.

I was chosen to be the Amateur ("Ham") Radio Program Leader for the Pendleton WFO soon after I arrived here since I was the only person on the staff at the time that had a ham radio license (KE4TRR). I have partnered with ham radio SKYWARN spotters who are interested in spinning up amateur radio SKYWARN Nets on local 2-meter repeaters. These hams have organized SKYWARN Nets in several counties in Pendleton's County Warning and Forecast Area (CWFA). I have supported the SKYWARN Program by improving the Pendleton WFO's outreach to spotters by working with Brandon Coughlin, BENTON-11H, KA7BPR, to design the Pendleton SKYWARN website at www.skywarn-pdt.org.

The varied terrain and especially the mountains in our CWFA make forecasting the weather here at times a real challenge. The seasonal migrations of the upper level Jet Stream across our CWFA make for some hair-raising moments for Forecasters with high winds, associated dust storms, and run-away wild fires.

A Call For Pictures!

www.weather.gov/Pendleton

On occasion we receive pictures via email from you, our hard working weather spotters. This year we'd like to issue a "call for pictures". Beginning this spring we will be posting weather related spotter photos that are submitted to us via email. They will be made viewable on our homepage in the spotter section. This will be just another way that we showcase you and the wild weather we see across central Oregon and Washington. This is purely for fun, so have fun taking those pictures!

If you would like to participate please send your pictures (as an attachment) to Mike Cantin at Michael.cantin@noaa.gov. Please include your name and spotter number if you'd like it posted by your picture. You can send pictures anytime and for any season. Thanks!!

Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head

By Mary Smith

Everyone talks about the weather. There are also hundreds of songs related to weather. Can you match the following songs on the left with the artist best known for the song on the right? Good Luck!!

1. ____ I Like the Weather
2. _____ It's a Sunshine Day
3. _____ Seasons Change
4. _____ Somewhere Over the Rainbow
5. _____ The Thunder Rolls
6. _____ Ain't No Sunshine
7. _____ Good Day Sunshine
8. _____ Hot Fun in the Summertime
9. _____ Stormy Monday
10. _____ Rainy Night in Georgia
11. _____ Have You Ever Seen the Rain?
12. _____ The Rainbow Connection
13. _____ Hazy Shade of Winter
14. _____ Rainy Days and Mondays
15. _____ When the Sun Goes Down
16. _____ I Love a Rainy Night
17. _____ Riders On the Storm
18. _____ Blowing in the Wind
19. _____ Get Off My Cloud
20. _____ Winds of March
21. _____ Kentucky Rain
22. _____ Here Comes the Rain Again

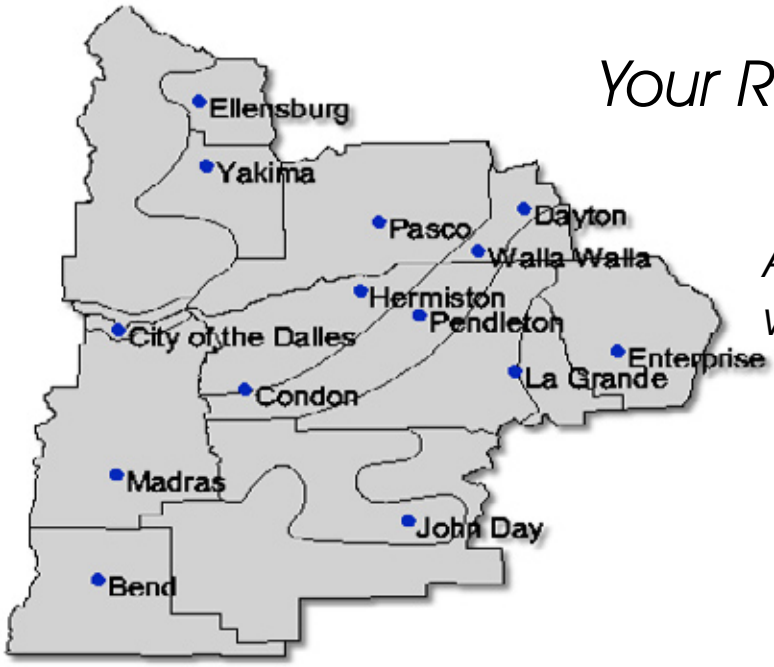
A. Sly and the Family Stone
B. Journey
C. Eric Clapton
D. Garth Brooks
E. 10,000 Maniacs
F. Brooke Benton
G. Expose
H. Kermit the Frog
I. The Beatles
J. Elvis
K. Judy Garland
L. Bob Dylan
M. The Brady Bunch
N. Creedence Clearwater Revival
O. The Doors
P. Rolling Stones
Q. Paul Simon/The Bangles
R. Bill Withers
S. Kenny Chesney
T. Eurythmics
U. Eddie Rabbit
V. The Carpenters

Mail or email your answers in for a chance to win cool NWS stuff!! Winner drawn April 28th. Answers will be posted on the internet.

Email: michael.cantin@noaa.gov
Mail: Mike Cantin
c/o Spotter Quiz
2001 NW 56th Drive
Pendleton, OR 97801

SKYWATCH

Your Regional Spotter News



Also available on the web at:
www.weather.gov/Pendleton

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